

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace paragraph [0001] with the following amended paragraph:

[0001] The present application is a continuation-in-part of ~~U.S. patent application Ser. No. 10/738,130~~ U.S. Patent No. 7,527,638, filed on Dec. 16, 2003 and entitled "Methods and Devices for Minimally Invasive Spinal Fixation Element Placement," which is hereby incorporated herein in its entirety.